

agents that could be used in bioterrorist attacks against American agriculture.

LOCAL LAW ENFORCEMENT ACT OF 2001

Mr. SMITH of Oregon. Mr. President, I rise today to speak about hate crimes legislation I introduced with Senator KENNEDY in March of this year. The Local Law Enforcement Act of 2001 would add new categories to current hate crimes legislation sending a signal that violence of any kind is unacceptable in our society.

I would like to describe a terrible crime that occurred April 16, 1995 in Seattle, WA. An attacker threatened a gay man by holding a gun to the victim's head and using anti-gay slurs. The assailant, Daniel Gooch, 30, was charged with fourth-degree assault in connection with the incident.

I believe that government's first duty is to defend its citizens, to defend them against the harms that come out of hate. The Local Law Enforcement Enhancement Act of 2001 is now a symbol that can become substance. I believe that by passing this legislation, we can change hearts and minds as well.

VETERANS' BENEFITS IMPROVEMENT ACT

Mr. JOHNSON. Mr. President, I rise today to urge an anonymous Senate colleague to lift his or her hold that has been placed on critical legislation for America's veterans.

As you are aware, the Senate Veterans' Affairs Committee approved important legislation in October that will make significant improvements to the Montgomery GI Bill, expand benefits for Persian Gulf War veterans, and enhance the VA Home Loan program. The Senate must act on the Veterans' Benefits Improvement Act of 2001 before the end of this legislative session.

I have advocated updating education benefits for veterans and introduced comprehensive legislation with Senator SUSAN COLLINS (R-ME) at the beginning of the year to bring Montgomery GI Bill benefits in line with the rising costs of higher education. The Veterans' Benefits Improvement Act represents an important first step in ultimately restoring the effectiveness of the Montgomery GI Bill as a tool in the recruitment and retention of the best and brightest in our armed forces.

Unfortunately, an anonymous member of the Senate is preventing veterans from receiving these expanded educational benefits.

I am equally disappointed that this anonymous hold is threatening our ability to increase the VA home loan guaranty in order to keep pace with FHA loan guaranties and extend housing loan guaranties for members of the Selected Reserve.

Finally, I find it disturbing that during a time of war an anonymous member of Congress is willing to halt legis-

lation that would help Persian Gulf War veterans with service-connected disabilities and Vietnam Veterans exposed to Agent Orange. The Veterans' Benefits Improvement Act rectifies several oversights for these brave men and women who served their country while also illustrating to members of the Armed Forces that our country keeps its promises to our veterans.

The Veterans of Foreign Wars (VFW) recently wrote Senate Minority Leader TRENT LOTT (R-MS) and urged him to prevail upon his colleagues to release the anonymous hold on this bill. The VFW correctly points out that with American servicemen and women currently in harms way, there is no justification for blocking action on legislation that recognizes veterans' service to our nation. I ask unanimous consent to have a copy of the VFW's letter printed in the CONGRESSIONAL RECORD following my remarks.

I urge all Senators to help expedite passage of this important legislation and look forward to continue working with my colleagues on veterans legislation.

There being no objection, the letter was ordered to be printed in the RECORD, as follows:

VETERANS OF FOREIGN WARS
OF THE UNITED STATES,
Washington, DC, December 3, 2001.

Hon. TRENT LOTT,
Senate Minority Leader,
U.S. Senate, Washington, DC.

DEAR SENATOR LOTT: On behalf of the 2.7 million members of the Veterans of Foreign Wars and its Ladies Auxiliary, I urge you, as Senate Majority Leader, to prevail upon one of your Republican colleagues to release an anonymous hold he has placed on a piece of legislation of great importance to our nation's veterans.

This bill, the Veterans' Benefits Improvement Act of 2001, would significantly benefit the men and women who have served in our Armed Forces as well as those serving today and tomorrow.

It is our understanding that the Senator who is blocking action on this bill is concerned that, along with a number of other important provisions, it would authorize too much money on enhancements to the Montgomery GI Bill. We are disappointed and angered that this individual would single handedly prevent a vote on this much needed legislation, particularly for the sake of preventing an essential increase in a educational benefit for veterans.

With American servicemen and women on guard at home and standing in harms way abroad, we assert that there is no justification for blocking action on legislation that appropriately recognizes and rewards their very special service to the nation.

This measure is much needed and enjoys strong support in both the House and Senate. It is time that it be brought up and voted upon.

Sincerely,

ROBERT E. WALLACE,
Executive Director.

RETIREMENT OF JENNY OGLE

Mr. VOINOVICH. Mr. President, I rise today to pay tribute to Ms. Jenny Ogle, who is retiring at the end of this month after 23 years of service to the

citizens of Ohio and the United States of America.

Many of my colleagues might not realize this but Senator MIKE DEWINE and I have one of the few joint case-work operations in the Senate. Shortly after I was elected, Senator DEWINE graciously offered to combine our case-work services in an effort to better serve our constituents in Ohio by avoiding duplication of effort and by saving money on staff and office expenses.

To head up this office, MIKE and I asked Jenny Ogle, who had been MIKE's own Director of Constituent Services since 1995, and who had been a caseworker for MIKE from 1982 to 1989 when he was in the House of Representatives. In the interim years, while MIKE was serving as my Lieutenant Governor, Jenny brought her experience to Congressman DAVE HOBSON, where she served as casework manager.

I knew that Senator DEWINE and I were asking a lot of Jenny to run this new one-stop operation, but I was confident, given the great work that she had done for MIKE and for DAVE, that she could handle the load and do it well.

And I was right. For the past 3 years Jenny has been our Director of Constituent Services, and has done an excellent job in ensuring that all our casework is handled properly and in a timely manner.

One of the things that I have come to respect about Jenny is her leadership and interpersonal skills and her ability to reach out and make a difference in the lives of so many people. In fact, she could probably write a book based on the cases she handled personally as well as the cases she "quarterbacked" as Constituent Services Director. Jenny has a unique ability to bring out the best in herself, but more important, she has a real talent for bringing out the best in her staff.

I have often said that the most important work that my office does is outreach to my fellow Ohioans, and in terms of outreach and getting things done for the people of Ohio, Jenny has had a major impact. She can rest assured that her accomplishments are appreciated by me and my entire staff and her influence will continue to be felt for many years to come.

I will genuinely miss Jenny's service because she is a consummate professional. Throughout her career in constituent services in both the House and Senate, Jenny has dedicated herself to helping solve the problems of tens of thousands of Ohioans, many of whom have had nowhere else to turn. She is one of those rare individuals who can honestly say that they have made a difference in the lives of their fellow man.

I am proud of what she has been able to accomplish, and I know that her family is just as proud of her, if not more so. I thank Jenny for her service, and I wish her and her husband, Mike, a happy and healthy retirement together.